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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal sensitivity refers to the perception of the thoughts, feelings and reactions of another person with whom one is interacting. To examine the effects of sex and leader/subordinate role upon interpersonal sensitivity, female, male and mixed-sex dyads (N=72) were first observed in interaction and then asked to complete questionnaires. Data analyses showed that those in subordinate roles were more sensitive to the feelings of the other dyad member than those in leader roles. Subordinates were more sensitive to how the leader felt about them than to how the leaders felt about themselves and leaders were primarily sensitive to how the subordinates felt about themselves. While there was no main effect for sex, mixed-sex dyads were more sensitive than same-sex dyads, and females were more sensitive to males than to other females. The results suggest these interaction effects provide evidence that sensitivity is an interactive process, affected by the respective roles of the interactants. (WAS)

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Women's Intuition:

The Effect of Subordinate Role Upon Interpersonal Sensitivity

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Running Head: Women's Intuition

Abstract

The study investigated interpersonal sensitivity within interacting dyads (female, male, and mixed-sex), specifically examining the effects of sex and leader/subordinate role upon interpersonal sensitivity. Sensitivity refers to the perception of the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of another person with whom one is interacting.

The results showed that those in subordinate roles were more sensitive to the feelings of the other dyad member than those in leader roles. An interaction showed that subordinates were more sensitive to how the leader felt about them than to how the leaders felt about themselves, while the leaders were primarily sensitive to how the subordinates felt about themselves. It was also found that, while there was no main effect for sex, mixed-sex dyads were more sensitive than same-sex dyads, and females were more sensitive to males than to other females.

These interaction effects provide evidence that sensitivity is an interactive process, affected by the respective roles of the interactants. It is argued that the subordinate role of females in our culture may contribute to the findings in past studies of interpersonal sensitivity suggesting that females were more sensitive than males. "Women's intuition" perhaps would best be changed to "subordinate's intuition."

Women's Intuition:
The Effect of Subordinate Role Upon Interpersonal Sensitivity

High interpersonal sensitivity (rapport) exists between two interacting people when they really understand one another, when they are accurately tuned to one another's feeling and thought. This sensitivity is quite variable. An individual experiences interpersonal sensitivity more at some times than at others, more in some contexts than in others. What causes us to be more or less sensitive to other persons? If it were primarily a personality trait, or a skill, there would be more consistency in this ability. However, since there seems to be great variability, even within individuals, it must be affected by the social context. Being able to pinpoint the situational variables that affect sensitivity certainly would have valuable implications for most interpersonal relationships, in health, education, and business.

Although social psychologists have long been interested in how people perceive other people, most research has not looked at people's peceptions of actual others in real interaction. The main research traditions have centered on (1)the perception of another person's more stable personality traits such as leadership and warmth (e.g., Asch, 1946; Dymond, 1949), (2)the recognition of emotion as depicted in photographs or films (e.g., Ekman, 1973; Izard, 1971; Rosenthal, Hall, DiMatteo, Rogers, & Archer, 1979), (3)empathy, or the vicarious experiencing

of another person's emotional response, as depicted in pictures and stories (e.g., Buck, 1975; Feshbach & Roe, 1968; Hamilton, 1973; Hoffman, 1977b), (4)interpreting written descriptions or pictures of social situations (e.g., Chapin, 1967; Feffer, 1959; O'Sullivan and Guilford, 1966), or (5)self-report through true-false item tests (e.g., Hogan, 1969; Mehrabian & Epstein,1972). Since the ability of subjects to perceive the affect of another person within an ongoing interaction is not actually studied in any of these traditions, the contribution of social context to interpersonal sensitivity has been neglected.

The neglect is unfortunate. Social interaction not only involves the interactants' perceptions of one anothers' feelings, but also involves their perceptions of one anothers' reactions to the immediate social context. For example, within an interaction the interactants may seek answers to questions such as: Does he like me? Does she understand what I am saying? Is he feeling competitive with me? Does she think she is controlling this interaction? Does she think I am intelligent? This concern with the impression one is making on another person and how the other person is feeling about himself or herself is an aspect of person perception that deserves more attention from social psychologists.

The research reported here, using a paradigm similar to that used by Laing, Phillipson, & Lee (1966) in clinical work, was designed to investigate sensitivity to the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of another person with whom one is currently interacting, and to investigate the effects of sex and role upon this sensitivity.

Sex and role. Although there is a common belief that females

possess a special ability to sense the feelings of another person (e.g., Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972), this female advantage appears to depend upon the particular aspect of sensitivity being considered. Maccoby & Jacklin (1974), in their review of thirty studies on "empathy", concluded that females had no advantage over males in their sensitivity to social cues. Hoffman (1977a) criticized Maccoby & Jacklin's review for having grouped together studies of relatively unrelated abilities. He separated pertinent studies into the three categories of empathy, recognition of affect, and cognitive perspective taking. He concluded that females had more empathic ability (vicarious affective response) than males, but were superior to males neither in assessing how another person feels nor in cognitive perspective taking. Hall (1978,1979), in a review of 75 studies on skill in decoding nonverbal cues, concluded that females do have a superior ability to assess affect through nonverbal cues. There appears, then, to be evidence that females are more sensitive than males to affect in some areas.

One explanation suggested for the female advantage that does exist ("women's intuition") is that those in a subordinate, or "oppressed", role need to be aware of the feelings, thoughts, and responses of their superiors in order to respond to their needs and acquire their favor (Hall, 1979; Miller, 1976; Thomas, Franks, and Calonico, 1972; Weitz, 1974). If so, the subordinate status of women in our society may have led to their development of a greater ability to sense another person's feelings in order to protect their own interests.

Pursuing the "oppressed role" hypothesis a bit further, if

subordinates are more sensitive to others in order to acquire the favor of the leaders, then it would follow that they would be most sensitive to how the leaders felt about them (i.e., "does he like me?", "does he think I am doing a good job?") as opposed to how the leaders feel about themselves (i.e., "is he feeling self confident?").

In the research reported here, the effects of sex and role upon two kinds of sensitivity were studied: (1)sensitivity to what impression one is making upon another person, and (2)sensitivity to the other person's feelings about himself or herself; i.e., sensitivity to the other person's current self perceptions.

Sex composition of the dyad. The "oppression" explanation for women's intuition might lead one also to expect the sex of the object of perception to affect one's interpersonal sensitivity; that is, females may be more sensitive to males, the presumptive "oppressors", than to other females. There is evidence that this is true. Weitz (1976) found that females were more "tuned in" to and responsive to males than to females. Hall and Halberstadt (1981) hypothesized that, if it is oppression that leads to greater sensitivity, then more "oppressed" females (those with more traditional attitudes and marriages) would be more sensitive to nonverbal cues than less traditional women. They found a tendency for this to be true only when the women were perceiving a male. When a female was sending the nonverbal cues, the less traditional women were better decoders.

Other research also supports the expectation of greater sensitivity between opposite-sex pairs than between same-sex pairs. For example,

Reitan & Shaw (1964) found that both sexes conformed more in mixed-sex groups than in same-sex groups, and Wyer & Malinowsky (1972) found that mixed-sex pairs were less individualistic and less competitive than same sex-pairs. Snodgrass and Rosenthal (Note 1) found that members of mixed-sex pairs perceived themselves to be less dominant than did those in same-sex pairs. It appears that people assume more cooperative and friendly interaction styles when with the opposite sex. Also, we might expect mixed-sex pairs to be more motivated to be sensitive to each other because of the potential relationship.

Interpersonal sensitivity as interaction. Although Hall (1978) found that, in general, the sex of the person being judged had no significant effect upon one's ability to assess affect from nonverbal cues, the studies she reviewed did not involve interacting people assessing the current feelings of each other. There are many variables involved in the social context of an ongoing interaction that might influence interpersonal sensitivity. The sex composition of the group, the roles of the participants within this interaction, the importance of the interaction to the participants (motivation), the liking of the interactants for one another (attraction), the tasks involved in the interaction, all would influence sensitivity. These variables have not been examined in the research on nonverbal skills.

An important feature of interpersonal sensitivity within ongoing interaction is the fact that it is an interaction between two people (S and O). Sensitivity, then, is an interaction of S's ability to "decode", or understand O's affect, and O's ability to "encode", or

express his or her affect. The two elements are interdependent; regardless of the skill S may have at understanding other people, her ability to understand O within an interaction with O will be affected by O's expressiveness. Also, O may very well alter his expressiveness depending upon how well S seems to be "reading" him; that is, he may want to remain more private or less so, depending upon the situation.

Although "sensitivity" is used in this paper to indicate S's understanding of O's affect, it is considered to be an interaction between S's ability to decode and O's ability to encode. Sensitivity, as used here, indicates a two-way exchange within a dyadic interaction, and is referred to as "S's sensitivity" only to indicate which dyad member is encoding (O) and which is decoding (S), and not intended to imply dependence on S alone. The decision to speak of the sensitivity as if it were located in the decoder is based on nothing more than common usage.

The study. The research reported here was designed to look at interpersonal sensitivity within an ongoing interaction, rather than a static, or one-way situation such as pictures or films. Of specific interest were sex differences in interpersonal sensitivity (that is, the effects of the sex of the perceiver, the sex of the perceived, and the interaction of the two), and the examination of the "oppressed role" explanation for female superiority in interpersonal sensitivity.

If there is a female advantage in interpersonal sensitivity that is primarily sex-based, then my results will show a main effect for sex; females will be more sensitive than males. If, however, the subordinate role actually helps explain "women's intuition", then I will find a main

effect for role; that is, those in the subordinate role will prove more sensitive to the feelings of the other person than will those in the leader role, even when half the leaders are female. However, since in our culture males have traditionally been the dominant ones, females may very well be more sensitive to males than to females, regardless of the role they are assigned.

Thus, the hypotheses are: (1a)those assigned a subordinate role will be more sensitive than those assigned a leader role, and (1b) those who are perceived to be less dominant in the interaction will be more sensitive than those perceived to be more dominant; (2)the subordinates will be more sensitive to how the leaders feel about them than to how the leaders feel about themselves; (3)mixed-sex pairs will be more sensitive than same sex pairs; and (4)females will be more sensitive to males than to other females.

Method

Overview

Thirty-six dyads (72 people) each interacted for approximately one hour. Four times during the interaction the two members of the dyad were asked to fill out rating scales indicating how they felt about themselves, the other person, and the activity, and also to indicate how they thought the other person felt about the same items.

Subjects

One hundred and thirty-four volunteers, predominantly Harvard-Radcliff College undergraduates, recruited through psychology courses

and advertisements on bulletin boards in the psychology building, were administered a battery of personality tests including a sex-role inventory (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

Subjects were told they would interact in the laboratory with another subject whom they did not know. Subjects were selected and paired according to their schedules; that is, the list of pretested Ss were contacted in the order in which they turned in their pretests, and were paired whenever two could come into the laboratory at the same time. They were paid $4 per hour for participating in the interactions. Half of the 72 subjects were female.

Procedure

One member of each dyad was randomly assigned the leader role at the beginning of the interaction by being asked to teach the other member finger spelling. The role of teacher or student was randomly assigned (with three exceptions: in each of these cases a member of the dyad already knew the signed alphabet and was, of necessity, assigned the teacher role). The teacher-student roles were chosen to represent leader-subordinate roles because in dyadic interactions leadership often arises in a teacher-like role.

After the lesson, the dyad members played a series of competitive block-stacking games called Blockhead. Finally they played Password, a cooperative word-guessing game.

Four times, after each of the three activities (lesson, competitive game and cooperative game) and at the end of the interaction, the two

members of the dyad were asked to fill out questionnaires on which they rated on scales from 1 to 7 their impressions (feelings, thoughts) concerning themselves and the other person throughout the past task and also rated how they thought the other person felt about the same items. There was a total of 48 rating scales in all four questionnaires. Sample items are "I liked him", "I felt competitive", "I was a good teacher", and "I was the dominant one." Each item was rated in four ways; e.g., "I was the dominant one", "He was the dominant one", "He felt I was the dominant one", and "He felt he was the dominant one."

The subjects' self-ratings included 13 items concerning dominance within the dyad; items such as "I was the dominant one", "I was the leader", and "I controlled the interaction." The mean of these 13 ratings indicated their self-ratings of dominance throughout the interaction and was used in correlation analyses.

Dependent Variables

The ratings described above were employed in the construction of interpersonal sensitivity scores. These variables were correlation coefficients (transformed by Fisher's z) computed separately for each subject. A subject's (S's) sensitivity score was computed by correlating the items in which S rated how he or she thought the other person (O) felt, with the corresponding items in which O made self-ratings. Each correlation was based on the 48 pairs of ratings. Correlating several items avoided the biases inherent in difference scores (Cronbach, 1955, 1958), and, rather than measure how well one can guess

another's actual rating, I measured how well one senses a pattern of variation in another's ratings on items made several times throughout the interaction.[1]

Two such sensitivity scores were formed: (1)S's sensitivity to the impression he or she was making on O; i.e., the ability to sense O's feelings about S (O SEES ME); and (2)S's sensitivity to O's current self perceptions; i.e., the ability to sense O's feelings about O (O SEES SELF).

The analyses employed a 4-way analysis of variance with two repeated measures, the between-dyads factors were Leader's sex and Subordinate's sex, and the within-dyads factors were role (leader/subordinate) and type of sensitivity(O SEES ME/O SEES SELF). "Leaders" were those who had been assigned to teach the "subordinates".

Results

The two dyad members' sensitivity scores correlated 0.42(p=.01, df=34) for O SEES ME and 0.28(p=.08, df=34) for O SEES SELF, indicating that the dyad members tended to be similarly sensitive to each other, significantly so on sensitivity to the impression one is making on the other (O SEES ME). As shown in Table 1, the mean sensitivity scores were significantly greater than zero, showing that people were quite accurate in their sensitivity to the feelings and reactions of another person with whom they were interacting. O SEES ME and O SEES SELF correlated 0.33(p=.05,df=34) for leaders and 0.42(p=.01, df=34) for subordinates, indicating a moderate and significant relationship between the

two sensitivities; that is, when S was sensitive to how O felt about S, he or she also tended to be sensitive to how O felt about O.

Insert Table 1 about here

Role effects

Role. As shown in the means across the bottom of Table 1, there was a strong main effect for role ($F(1,32)=7.70$, $p=.01$, effect size=$.98\sigma^2$), showing that subordinates were much more sensitive to the leaders' feelings than were leaders to subordinates' feelings, thus supporting hypothesis 1a.

Type of sensitivity. There was also a main effect for type of sensitivity ($F(1,32)=4.65$, $p=.$[illegible], effect size=$.76\sigma$); that is, subjects were more sensitive to how the other person felt about them, or what impression they were making on the other person, than to how the other person felt about himself or herself. This can be seen in the means for O SEES ME and O SEES SELF in Table 1.

Role by type. However, the interaction in the body of Table 1 tells us that subordinates were more sensitive to how the leaders felt about them, O SEES ME, and that leaders were more sensitive to how the subordinates felt about themselves, O SEES SELF, ($F(1,32)=7.60$, $p=.01$, effect size=$.97\sigma$). This supports the second hypothesis that subordinates would be more sensitive to O SEES ME, suggesting that they had a greater need to be attuned to how the leaders felt about them in order

to acquire their favor, and that the leaders may have more freely expressed their feelings about the subordinates than their self perceptions. The other side of the interaction is just as interesting; that is, leaders were more sensitive to how the subordinates felt about themselves. This suggests that the subordinates may have expressed their own self perceptions more than their impressions of their leaders and that leaders may have been less concerned with the impressions they were making on the subordinates than with how the subordinates were feeling about themselves.

Self ratings of dominance. These effects of assigned leader/subordinate role were also reflected in the correlations of the subjects' self-ratings of dominance within the dyad and their sensitivity scores, supporting hypothesis 1b. The self-ratings of dominance correlated 0.26 with the assigned role (p=.03, df=34), showing that, although they significantly perceived their own dominance in accordance with their assigned roles, the small correlation implies that there was a large amount of variance in their self-ratings of dominance not accounted for by their assigned role. However, the more dominant the subjects perceived themselves to be, the less sensitive they were on Q SEES ME ($r(34)$=-.30, p=.07 for leaders and $r(34)$=-.37, p=.02 for subordinates), lending support to the major finding of the study that subordinates (especially when they see themselves as subordinate) are more sensitive to what the leader thinks of them. Also, the more dominant the subjects perceived Q to be, the less sensitive they were to Q SEES SELF ($r(34)$=-.38, p=.02 for leaders and $r(34)$=-.41, p=.01 for

subordinates). Dominance within a dyadic interaction (both as an assigned role and as self perception) appears to be detrimental to one's interpersonal sensitivity.

Sex Effects

Females vs males. The sex effects to be discussed pertain only to O SEES ME and are shown in Table 2. There were no significant effects for O SEES SELF, so it will not be further discussed. There were no significant sex main effects, so females were not more sensitive than males in this study, where half of the females were in the leader role.

Insert Table 2 about here

Mixed sex vs same sex. However, there was a significant interaction showing that mixed-sex pairs were more sensitive than same-sex pairs to the impression one is making on the other person ($F(1,32)=6.05$, $p=.02$, effect size=.87σ). The means are shown in Table 2. This supports the third hypothesis.

Females with males. To examine the hypothesis that females' sensitivity to males would be greater than their sensitivity to females, the means are shown separately for each role (see Table 3). The planned comparison testing female subordinates' sensitivity to male leaders vs. their sensitivity to female leaders gives $F(1,32)=6.64$, $p=.01$, effect size=.91σ, showing that females in a subordinate role are especially

sensitive to male leaders. The comparison of female leaders' sensitivity to male subordinates vs. their sensitivity to female subordinates gives $F(1,32)=3.44$, $p=.07$, effect size=.66σ, although not quite significant at the conventional level, there is a sizable effect in the predicted direction.

Insert Table 3 about here

Females with females. Looking at the means in Table 2, we see that female-female pairs were the least sensitive of all the combinations, an unexpected finding. The contrast comparing female pairs with the other combinations gives $F(1,32)=5.58$, $p=.03$, effect size=.84σ. (Since this was not a planned comparison, the significance level should be considered with caution). This finding casts doubt on the existence of "women's intuition", since in this study it does not appear to operate generally across objects.

Sex-role orientation. Masculinity and femininity scores (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) were obtained for the subjects from the pretest battery. These scores were correlated with their sensitivity score, Q SEES ME, to see if traditional sex-role orientation might help explain the results. (See Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

In female-female pairs, the more feminine subordinates were more sensitive ($r(7)=.61$, $p=.04$), and the subordinates were more sensitive to less feminine leaders ($r(7)=-.53$, $p=.07$). Also, the less masculine leaders were more sensitive ($r(7)=-.55$, $p=.06$) and leaders were more sensitive to less masculine subordinates ($r(7)=-.74$, $p=.01$).

In pairs of male leaders and female subordinates, the females were more sensitive to more masculine males ($r(8)=.64$, $p=.02$) and the more feminine males were more sensitive to their female subordinates ($r(8)=.63$, $p=.02$).

In other words, female subordinates were more sensitive to a masculine male and not very sensitive to a feminine female, even though it was the more feminine female subordinates who were sensitive to their female leaders. This implies that traditional femininity may be detrimental to females in leadership positions with other females, but may be helpful to females in subordinate roles with other women.

These results do not indicate a clear-cut relationship between sex-role orientation and sensitivity, therefore the sex-composition effects cannot be explained by sex-role orientation.

Sub-categories of Sensitivity

The sensitivity scores discussed thus far have included all items on the questionnaires, representing overall sensitivity to several

different affects. In separating the items into sub-categories and creating different types of sensitivity scores, we can attempt to see which affects contribute most to the results in the study. Most of the 48 items were divided into 6 sub-categories (a factor analysis comfirmed the division that was done on a theoretical basis). The six categories are: teacher/student role satisfaction, password skill, competitiveness, liking (attraction), sociability, and dominance.

Insert Table 5 about here

Analyses on each of the six sub-categories of sensitivity revealed an interesting pattern underlying the results found for the overall sensitivity (see Table 5). The role effect, that is, the greater sensitivity of the subordinates, was found in the subcategories reflecting task-orientation: password skill ($F(1,32)=12.88$, $p=.002$, effect size=1.27σ), role satisfaction ($F(1,32)=5.23$, $p=.03$, effect size=.81σ), and marginally in competitiveness ($F(1,32)=3.46$, $p=.07$, effect size=.66σ). There was no significant role effect found in either of the sub-categories reflecting social-orientation nor in that for dominance.

However, the sex-composition effect, that is, the greater sensitivity found in mixed-sex pairs, was found in the social-oriented categories: liking ($F(1,32)=4.00$, $p=.05$, effect size=.71σ) and marginally in sociability ($F(1,32)=2.50$, $p=.12$, effect size=.56σ), but not in the task-oriented sub-categories nor in dominance.

Competitiveness and sociability tend to reflect both effects marginally. This is not surprising in that they include items that are both task-oriented and social-oriented. Dominance did not produce any significant or marginally significant effects.

Discussion

The results reported here lend strong support to the "oppression" explanation for female superiority in interpersonal sensitivity. In fact, when leader/subordinate role was crossed with sex, females showed no advantage over males in sensitivity to others. However, subordinates were more sensitive to leaders than leaders were to subordinates. This may be because of the greater need of subordinates to be aware of the feelings of their superiors in order to acquire their favor (i.e., to "do a good job") and it may also be the result of the leaders expressing their feelings more openly in order to give feedback to their subordinates. In other words, the results suggest that both dyad members are focussing on the feelings of the subordinate. It may also be related to opportunity; that is, the leaders may be too preoccupied with the responsibility of the task to be as attuned to the feelings of the subordinates. More research needs to be done to tease out the various causes of this effect of the assigned role upon interpersonal sensitivity.

The interaction of role by type of sensitivity is quite interesting. Subordinates were more sensitive to how the leaders felt about them than to how leaders felt about themselves. It was suggested that greater

sensitivity to the feelings of another person may come from the need for a subordinate to be in touch with the needs and reactions of their superior in order to win their favor. If this is true, then it is reasonable to expect subordinates' greater sensitivity to be in sensing what the other person thinks of them more than in sensing what the other person feels about himself or herself. It may also be that leaders are more expressive of their feelings about the subordinates in a teaching task; in their effort to be sure that the students are learning the material they give reinforcement or more practice or such, thereby letting the students know their impression of them in this task.

Likewise, it is reasonable to expect that sensitivity to O SEES SELF might be expected to be greater in good therapists, mothers, teachers, and such. In fact, the interaction indicates that the leaders, or teachers in this study, were more sensitive to O SEES SELF than to O SEES ME, suggesting that leaders, especially when in a helping role, are more attuned to the subordinates' self-perceptions; i.e., whether he or she understands, feels confident, is enjoying learning, or such. This result also suggests that students may be more expressive of their feelings about themselves in such a learning task. This certainly merits further study. It would be interesting to vary the task and see if this same result would appear for a leader role that is less help-oriented; for example, more authoritarian.

In this study, the leader/subordinate roles were assigned only for the first of three tasks. There was no need for either dyad member to be dominant in the other tasks. However, the sensitivity measures

covered the entire interaction, including all three tasks. In fact, when we looked at the sub-categories of sensitivity, the strongest role effect was found in Password skill, the last of the three tasks. If the effect of such temporary, randomly assigned roles can be so strong, it is credible that persons who grow up in subordinate roles (i.e., females) would develop exceptional sensitivity to their superiors.

Since this study looked only at dyads in which leader/subordinate roles were assigned, there was no way to find out whether the subordinates would have been just as sensitive to someone not in a superior role. However, examining the differences between males and females revealed that female subordinates were much more sensitive to males (traditionally the leaders) than to females. Although both sexes tended to be more sensitive to the opposite sex, females who were subordinate to males were the most sensitive of all. In our culture the prevalent situation is for females to be subordinate to males, thus a special sensitivity may develop between males and females that may contribute to what has come to be known as "women's intuition".

In this study females were not particularly sensitive to each other. In the nonverbal decoding research, females have been found to be more sensitive to a female stimulus than are males (see Hall, 1978). However, as previously pointed out, this research did not involve interactions. Perhaps the results found here reflect something involved in the interaction of two females; the expressiveness of one and the perceptiveness of the other.

Some feminists say that our society has separated women from each

other and has pitted them against each other; that women compete with each other for men. And now women must compete with each other for a few professional jobs in a male world. They also suggest that men interact with each other to a much greater extent and learn to cooperate and to develop an interdependency through team sports in adolescence, and through business associations as adults (Harragan, 1977; Hennig & Jardin, 1977; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). This could be an explanation for these results; we see here that men are almost as sensitive to other men as they are to women, while women show more of a difference depending upon the sex of the other person. However, this explanation is not satisfactory; especially when the subjects are Harvard students where the females are noted for their strong feminist tendencies, and, according to Harvard men, their relative lack of interest in men. This unexpected finding is certainly fascinating and warrants further research to determine just why these females were not very sensitive to each other.

These results support the basic argument of this research on sensitivity within ongoing social interaction, that sensitivity is an interaction between two people more than it is an inherent personality trait or a skill. The sensitivity of these subjects was affected by their relative roles within the dyad and the sex-composition of the dyad (rather than the sex of the perceiver alone); that is, by situational variables. Sensitivity was a dyadic, rather than an individualistic, "ability", affected by both members of the dyad, therefore involving expressiveness as well as perceptiveness.

These results stand as an invitation to social psychologists to

further explore the variables in the social context that may affect interpersonal sensitivity; variables such as the tasks involved in the interaction, the motivation of the dyad members, the size and composition of the group in which the interaction takes place, and the effects of the age of and the age differences among the interactants. Interpersonal sensitivity is truly a social phenomenon and the discovery of the situational variables affecting sensitivity will contribute to the improvement of social interactions in areas such as health, education, and business.

Reference Notes

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Footnotes

1. Despite the criticisms of *D*s, or difference scores (Cronbach, 1955, 1958; Gage & Cronbach, 1955), I computed them in addition to computing the correlation scores. Correlations of *D*s and the correlation scores for the different sensitivities were less than 0.23, indicating only a slight relationship. Analyses performed on the *D*s produced results similar to those obtained for the correlation scores; although the *F*s were smaller for the *D*s, most of the trends were in the same directions as those of the correlation scores. I have less confidence in the *D*s, since they have been shown to be biased measures of sensitivity, so I will not discuss them further.

2. Effect size (*d*) is an index of difference that is standardized by the variability in the groups; therefore, indicating the difference between the means in standard deviation units. An effect size of 0.20σ is considered small, 0.50σ medium, and 0.80σ large (Cohen, 1977). The computational formula is: $2\sqrt{F}/\sqrt{df}$.

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Table 1

Mean Interpersonal Sensitivity Scores*
by Role and Type of Sensitivity

N=36 dyads

	Role		
Type of Sensitivity	Leaders	Subordinates	Mean
O SEES ME	.40**	.53**	.47**
O SEES SELF	.45**	.42**	.44**
Mean	.43**	.48**	.45**

* Analyses were performed on Fisher's z transforms of the sensitivity correlations and were transformed back to r's for the tables.

** $p < .001$

Table 2

Mean Sensitivity to O SEES ME*

by Leaders' Sex and Subordinates' Sex

	Leaders' Sex		
Subordinates' Sex	Male	Female	Mean
Male	.45	.51	.48
Female	.53	.38	.46
Means	.49	.45	.47

* Analyses were performed on Fisher's z transforms of the sensitivity correlations and were transformed back to r's for the tables.

Table 3

Mean Interpersonal Sensitivity Score (O SEES ME)*

by Leaders' Sex, Subordinates' Sex, and Role

N=36 dyads

Leaders

	Leaders' Sex		
Subordinates' Sex	Male	Female	Mean
Male	.35	.47	.42
Female	.44	.34	.39
Mean	.40	.41	.40

Subordinates

	Leaders' Sex		
Subordinates' Sex	Male	Female	Mean
Male	.54	.55	.54
Female	.60	.41	.51
Mean	.57	.48	.53

* Analyses were performed on Fisher's *z* transforms of the sensitivity correlations and were transformed back to *r*'s for the tables.

Table 4

Correlations of Masculinity and Femininity Scores

with Sensitivity Scores (O SEES ME)

	Leaders' Sensitivity	Subordinates' Sensitivity
Female-Female Pairs (N=9)		
Leaders' Masculinity	-.55*	-.05
Leaders' Femininity	.31	-.53*
Subordinates' Masculinity	-.74**	.20
Subordinates' Femininity	.21	.61**
Male Leaders/Female Subordinates (N=10)		
Leaders' Masculinity	.22	.64**
Leaders' Femininity	.63**	.33
Subordinates' Masculinity	-.06	.20
Subordinates' Femininity	-.18	-.25
Female Leaders/Male Subordinates (N=8)		
Leaders' Masculinity	.45	-.30
Leaders' Femininity	-.36	.08
Subordinates' Masculinity	-.31	-.51*
Subordinates' Femininity	.24	-.10
Male-Male Pairs (N=9)		
Leaders' Masculinity	.28	.01
Leaders' Femininity	.09	-.12
Subordinates' Masculinity	.13	-.28
Subordinates' Femininity	-.15	.18

* $p < .10$

** $p < .05$

Table 5

Sub-categories of Sensitivity (O SEES ME)

by Role Effect and Sex-composition Effect

	Role Effect[a]			Interaction of Leaders' Sex by Subordinates' Sex: Sex-composition Effect[b]		
Sensitivity	F(1,32)	p	effect size(d)	F(1,32)	p	effect size(d)
Role Satisfaction	5.23	.03	.80σ	0.26	>.50	.18σ
Password Skill	12.88	.002	1.27σ	1.10	.30	.37σ
Competitiveness	3.46	.07	.66σ	1.96	.17	.49σ
Sociability	2.67	.11	.58σ	2.50	.12	.56σ
Liking	0.40	>.50	.22σ	4.00	.05	.71σ
Dominance	0.44	>.50	.23σ	0.02	>.50	.05σ

a Subordinates > Leaders in all cases where F >1.

b Mixed-sex > Same-sex in all cases where F >1.